

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Approved

Meeting of the 2016/2017 Bureau
Ottawa (Canada), 11-12 October 2016

Item 4(b) of the Provisional
Agenda

**FOLLOW-UP TO THE CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS 2016
SEMINAR ON STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS**

Note by Canada and UNECE

This note includes proposals for the follow-up to the CES seminar on strategic partnerships, held in April 2016. The Bureau discussed the issues raised and decided on the follow-up actions to the seminar.

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Conference of European Statisticians (CES) held a seminar on strategic partnerships at its plenary session in April 2016. Statistics Canada organized the seminar.
2. The Conference recognized the diversity of issues around partnerships with the information industry and considered it useful to undertake further work on the following issues related to strategic partnerships in official statistics:
 - (a) Collecting examples of successful (and unsuccessful) partnerships and finding low cost opportunities to share experience in building partnerships. In the longer term, this could lead to building up a community of practice and developing guidance on how to build successful partnerships;
 - (b) Legal framework that can facilitate or hinder building efficient partnerships, and its links with the statistical law;
 - (c) How to build a dialogue with privacy commissioners and civil society;
 - (d) Strategic opportunities to build partnerships with other data providers and data users in the context of measuring SDGs.
3. The Conference asked the Secretariat and the CES Bureau to follow up on the proposals and issues raised during the seminar. The Conference requested the CES Bureau to discuss at its October 2016 meeting how to implement the proposed follow-up actions, and encouraged CES members to use the papers and ideas produced by the seminar.

II. POSSIBLE ACTIONS

4. As discussed by the Conference, the rapidly increasing amount of available digital information provides possible new sources of information that could be helpful to the work of

statistical offices. In these conditions, partnerships with the information industry should become business as usual for statistical offices to fulfil their core mandate of providing better statistics for better decisions and better lives. Partnerships can help to innovate and meet the challenge of increasing expectations towards official statistics.

5. The following actions can be considered to implement the CES decisions taken at the seminar:

(a) Collecting examples of partnerships and finding low cost opportunities to share experience

6. A low cost opportunity for discussing strategic partnerships could be to share **countries' experiences** with both successful and unsuccessful partnerships through the wiki on the value of official statistics. The wiki includes a section on partnerships for increasing the value of official statistics. The wiki will be finalized by the Task Force in the course of 2016, and will be hosted by UNECE. The wiki could be updated by engaging countries through existing UNECE networks of experts, such as the dissemination and communication experts. Countries could be invited to update the wiki in the context of the regular meetings on dissemination and communication.

7. Alternatively, countries could be interested in a narrower set of strategic partnerships focused on emerging partnerships in the context of Big Data initiatives. The UNECE High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics has developed a Big Data Inventory (www1.unece.org/stat/platform/x/XAeDBg). Based on work from the UNECE and others on Big Data, the 45th Statistical Commission created a Global Working Group (GWG) on Big Data for official statistics. GWG has developed a Big Data Project Inventory to gather examples of current partnerships that are being piloted or implemented in countries. While the inventory is relatively new and is unlikely exhaustive at this point, this could be a basis for collecting information on the various kinds of partnerships that are developing in the context of Big Data. The global inventory can be found at: <http://unstats.un.org/bigdata/>. The success of the inventory will depend on countries providing input to the site.

(b) Legal framework for building efficient partnerships, and its links with the statistical law

8. This decision is linked with the work that CES is already undertaking on statistical legislation. CES has established a Task Force to develop guidance on common elements of national statistical legislation. The Task Force will review the strengths and shortcomings of legal and institutional frameworks of official statistics, explore opportunities and challenges from the environment of statistical production, identify common elements of sound legal frameworks, and draft good practice guidance.

9. CES could ask **a small group of countries to examine this issue more deeply, taking stock of the legal issues related to strategic partnerships, and look at best practices** in facilitating strategic partnerships in statistical legislation. The group could also consider the GWG draft Recommendations for access to Data from Private Organizations for Official Statistics to determine whether legal frameworks could support the implementation of some of these recommendations. The group's work would serve as a contribution to the CES Task Force on common elements of statistical legislation.

(c) How to build a dialogue with privacy commissioners and civil society

10. A **seminar** could be envisaged to examine best practices on how different national statistical offices have built efficient **dialogue with privacy commissioners and civil society**.

11. There is a link between work on the legal framework for statistics and a dialogue with privacy commissioners. As the CES decision points (b) and (c) are linked, the actions could be also combined. The small group proposed in para 9 and the proposed seminar could address both the legal framework for partnerships and building a dialogue with privacy commissioners. This could then provide feedback to the work of the Task Force on common elements of statistical legislation.

d) Strategic opportunities to build partnerships in the context of measuring SDGs

12. Many activities are currently taking place in terms of implementation of SDGs at global, regional and national levels. Therefore, it is important to find the right forum to address building partnerships in the context of SDGs.

13. To steer and coordinate the work related to statistics for SDGs under CES, the CES Bureau set up a Steering Group. The Group is preparing a Road Map on statistics for SDGs that provides guidance and identifies concrete actions to advance the development of official statistics for SDGs.

14. The Road Map Section VII includes a subsection on **partnerships in the context of statistical capacity building**. However, the Road Map could pay more attention to strategic partnerships also in other areas, such as reporting on SDG indicators and their communication and dissemination. Documents and summary of the discussion from the CES seminar on strategic partnerships can provide input to these parts of the Road Map.

15. It would be useful to identify **good practices and examples** from countries in **building strategic partnerships in the context of SDGs**.
